

Tips for the 8 Components of SLOP

Preparation

1. In order to both familiarize ELLs with and maintain a focus on the relevancy of the content and language objectives of a lesson:

a. Ensure that content and language objectives are written or posted in a location easily visible to students. Ask students to volunteer to read the objectives out loud.

b. Use language that clarifies and simplifies the objectives that may be difficult for students to understand. For example, explain to students that compare and contrast means to discuss ways in which ideas or items are alike and different.

2. Select content-area concepts that are at the appropriate academic grade-level for students. It is important to continually challenge ELLs with grade-level content material. Adaptations to text for multiple learning styles can result in a more thorough understanding of content concepts. Content can be adapted to meet the varying student levels of language proficiency in the following ways:

a. Before presenting a concept or lesson from the textbook, highlight the key vocabulary, concepts and summary statements.

b. Tape-record key portions or entire texts for ELLs to follow along with as they read. This is ideal for use at learning centers at any grade level.

c. Rewrite difficult text by looking for passages that are the most powerful in conveying the main ideas. That is, summarize the text making sure to include important content-specific vocabulary in shorter, linguistically simpler sentences that will be easier for ELLs to comprehend. The exact number of sentences used is not important; however, it is essential that key information is retained and content is not watered down.

d. Create study guides that are modified for the language proficiencies of ELLs. These study guides might include questions, important statements, and summaries of the text. Also, adapt exercises and activities related to the lesson according to the varying language proficiencies among students. For example, ask students who are more proficient in English to write a short, three-paragraph essay on a key concept. Modify the same activity even further for less language proficient ELL by asking them to list words or create five sentences that describe the concept.

3. Provide supplementary materials for activities to help students better comprehend new concepts, make clearer connections with the content, and learn new vocabulary related to a lesson. Educators may find the following tools effective:

a. Graphic organizers: Before reading content text, prepare a graphic organizer for ELLs (e.g., T-charts, Venn diagrams, time lines).

b. Hands-on Manipulatives and Realia: Provide real-life objects that help students make connections from content concepts to their own experiences.

c. Word Walls: Create word walls with key content vocabulary and/or word parts. Manipulate the words to help ELLs make new connections with the language.

Building Background

1. Create meaningful connections between the existing knowledge and personal experiences of ELLs and the content concepts to be taught. Foster the relevant connections through:

a. Picture Walls: Before reading a content-specific text, “walk” the students through the reading selection by skimming through the text and looking at visuals provided. The visuals highlighted might include time lines, pictures, graphs and more. Additionally, encourage students to take note of boldface vocabulary words found along the “walk” in order to familiarize them to content-specific vocabulary.

b. Picture Prompts: use “picture prompts” to help students connect prior knowledge to what they are studying.

c. Ask ELLs to list five things they know about the theme or concept. Allow them to draw pictures if they cannot come up with the English word.

Comprehensible Input

1. Modify speech patterns and language use to accommodate the proficiency levels of ELLs and provide clarity of content through the following:

a. Speak clearly and slowly using plenty of gestures. Avoid unnecessary jargon or idioms that may cause confusion.

b. Paraphrase and repeat key messages.

c. Use cognates to help students make connections between their native language and English.

2. Academic tasks can be further clarified for ELLs when the following techniques are used:

a. Create personalized vocabulary notebooks for each content class.

b. Present and model instructions in a clear, step-by-step manner using a visual to guide the students through the process.

c. Ask a student volunteer to summarize instructions in his or her own words and if possible, the native language of the ELL.

d. Encourage peer mentoring.

3. Use a variety of scaffolding techniques for clarifying concepts. Such scaffolding will enable teachers to check for student understanding and should gradually move students from teacher dependence to independence in learning.

Strategies

1. Provide general guidance in the use of learning strategies to help ELLs understand, study and retain information. These strategies become tools that students can continually use to become independent, active learners. Use:

a. Think-Alouds: Model think-alouds to help students understand the processes you use to better understand content concepts. Encourage students to exercise the same think-alouds as they practice different learning strategies.

b. Questioning: Provide evaluative questions that target higher levels of thinking which still simplifying language.

c. Word Sorts: Have students categorize words according to meaning, structure, word endings or sounds.

d. Direct Reading-Thinking Activities: Before ELLs read a text, ask them to predict what will happen. Stop periodically to ask for confirmation, revisions, or additional predictions as the class reads the text orally or silently, in pairs or as a group.

Interaction

1. Keep in mind the following when pairing ELLs or forming groups for successful collaborative interaction:

a. The linguistic and academic abilities of each student within the group.

b. The content and language objectives of the current lesson.

c. Particular personality conflicts that may arise.

d. The advantages to be gained by maximizing more academically and linguistically capable peers.

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d. The advantages to be gained by maximizing more academically and linguistically capable peers. The following tips may be helpful for beneficial interaction among ELLs:

a. If possible, occasionally group ELLs with the same native languages. A group peer can clarify new concepts as well as relate prior knowledge in the first language to the current topic to English words.

b. Frequently, group students of mixed language proficiencies. Structure activities to encourage more proficient peers to help peers new to English understand concepts and learn new vocabulary.

c. Use a variety of strategies for flexible grouping.

d.Regulate wait time as needed for ELLs to process questions and formulate answers according to their levels of English proficiency.

Practice and Application

1.ELLs need to consistently practice and apply the interdependent literacy domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing throughout the day. In this way, they will become more independent thinkers and learners, and the acquisition of knowledge and language will occur more successfully. Implement the following to effectively encourage practice and application for the acquisition of knowledge and language:

a.Cloze Activity: Provide ELLs with a fill-in-the-blank note outline that is partially completed.

b.Structure writing activities to focus on format (i.e., sentence, paragraph, etc.).

c.Read aloud to your students or have them read to a partner.

d.Ask students to explain concepts, definitions or classroom procedures orally.

Lesson Delivery

1. To support content and language objectives during the lesson, adapt the pace of the lesson according to the ability levels of the ELLs, and engage students for the majority of the lesson (90 to 100 percent):

a.Use a variety of activities such as games, discovery learning, and inquiry tasks.

b.Consistently use and practice the academic vocabulary throughout the class period or school day.

c.Relate learning to real-life situations.

d.Observe student progress throughout the lesson and adjust as necessary.

e.Model task and expectations.

Review and Assessment

1.Review and assessment throughout the instructional process helps to identify those ELLs who need additional instruction as well as those ready to move on. To be assured of student understanding and retention of content concepts and key vocabulary:

a.Use a variety of methods for eliciting group responses, especially those that are non-verbal.

b.Provide response templates so students may confidently participate.

c.Provide routines in the classroom.

d. As needed, simplify the language used in assessments or allow students to take oral exams.